



**ALAMEDA RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING**

DATE: Thursday, May 10, 2012
TIME: 7:00 p.m.
PLACE: City Hall Council Chambers

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Joe Restagno, Vice Chair Lola Brown, Commissioners Ann Cooke (late), Bill Delaney and Bill Sonneman

Absent: None.

Staff: Dale Lillard, outgoing Recreation & Park Director and Amy Wooldridge, incoming Recreation & Park Director

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approve the Minutes of March 8, 2012 Recreation & Park Commission Regular Meeting

M/S/C DELANEY/BROWN (unanimously approved)

"That the minutes of the March 8, 2012 Recreation & Park Commission Regular Meeting are approved."

Approved (4): Restagno, Brown, Delaney, Sonneman
Commissioner Cooke arrived after approval of the minutes.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, AGENDA

None.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Potential Action to Reduce the Number of Recreation & Park Commission Members from 7 to 5 (*Discussion/Action Item*)

Commissioner Sonneman asked if the Commission was supposed to initiate this action. Director Lillard explained that at a previous City Council meeting they had reviewed all the Boards and Commissions and took an action vote to either combine some of the bodies or reduce the number of members. The Council asked that the decision on reducing the number of members on the Recreation Commission come back to its members for a formal action before a final decision was made. There was a feeling on the Council that the body should remain with seven members to give a bigger cross section of the community a chance to be heard. Commissioner Sonneman respects the broader part of the community having a voice; however, they have struggled several times with meetings cancelled due to a lack of quorum. Community members are always welcome to attend meetings and give their opinions and concerns, but having five members makes better sense, and that's what he would recommend.

Commissioner Cooke said that although she is the newest member of the Commission, her goal is to make every meeting and also believes that five members are sufficient. Commissioner Delaney had presented at the City Council meeting, and had made the case that it wasn't just about having a quorum. The five current members are very qualified and that's all that's needed. Council Member Tam had asked that Commissioner Delaney go back to the group and make it a formal discussion point, vote on it and then give them their recommendation.

Vice Chair Brown agreed and believes that the Commission has handled all the responsibilities they've been tasked with. Chair Restagno also noted that when Commission resignations had happened in the past, there were no moves made to fill the vacancies.

Vice Chair Brown asked Director Wooldridge what her opinion was on the matter. Wooldridge responded that she would defer to the group as they would know what would work better and is a decision for them to make. Director Lillard said that the group of five had always done a good job and mentioned several projects that had gone very successfully over the years, so also deferred to their judgment on the matter.

Commissioner Sonneman moved that their recommendation would be to reduce the number of Commissioners to five; Vice Chair Brown seconded the motion.

M/S/C SONNEMAN/BROWN (unanimously approved)

"That the number of Recreation & Park Commission members be reduced to five."

Approved (5): Restagno, Brown, Cooke, Delaney, Sonneman

B. Willie Stargell Memorial Marker (*Discussion/Action Item*)

Hall of Fame Committee members Mario Mariani and Nick Cabral were present to speak on their request to place a Willie Stargell Memorial Marker in Washington Park. Willie Stargell grew up in Alameda and is a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. In July, there will be a postage stamp issued in his memory. They requested that the memorial be in place before the stamp is issued in mid-July. They expressed that this will be an excellent opportunity for the community of Alameda to shine and celebrate one of their citizens, and placing a memorial marker for Stargell at Washington Park where he got his start would do just that.

Commissioner Delaney asked if the objective is to bring greater awareness to the fact that Willie Stargell lived here, as there is already a street, ballpark and annual tournament named after him. He asked what is not being achieved by these designations that would be achieved with the memorial marker. The response was that the City would be involved, and there was no formal ribbon cutting when the street opened. With the stamp coming out, it brings renewed interest and would be a great thing for Alameda. With a permanent marker in place, people would learn more and see it each time they walk by.

Vice Chair Brown commented that she drives by Encinal High School and sees the big sign designating Willie Stargell Field. There is also a Toby Chavez and Doc Harrington

field, so there are a number of fields already named for sports figures that hailed from Alameda. She feels that Willie Stargell already has a lot of naming recognition in the City. Commissioner Cooke asked how much information would be on the marker; it would say he is a Baseball Hall of Famer and list his statistics. Mr. Cabral stated that this would be the pride of the West End and it is their time to shine.

Chair Restagno looked for some clarification on the financing side of it. Mr. Cabral stated their organization was going to cover the full cost of materials and installation. They would also have kids that need to do community service hours for school maintain the marker, so there would be zero cost to the City. Restagno asked what the dimensions would be, and as a rough idea, the base will be about six feet, and the height will be 3 ½ to 4 feet.

Commissioner Sonneman agreed with the value of this. The concerns the Recreation & Park Department have would be the cost and maintenance if there are any problems, and these seem to have been answered. Sonneman believes that everything that was said shows the importance of this to the community, and believes it is important for the West End as well.

Commissioner Cooke believes this would be a good educational opportunity and should be part and parcel of the City's education program. Commissioner Delaney suggested that the Commission work together with the Committee on the text or content of the marker as well as the specifications, and figure out how to launch it so it's tied into the field and street named for Stargell as well.

Director Wooldridge wanted the Commission to be aware that this project does not need to be on a quick timeframe as this would be a permanent display. The committee, commission and community all need to be comfortable with the outcome. The Commission could approve the concept tonight and request there be a specific plan including dimensions and text brought back to the next meeting. The Committee and Commission will work together.

There was a concern that the Commission would be too slow, and Commissioner Delaney pointed out that the letter asking for permission to place the marker had only been written the previous week, and here they were tonight discussing it. Delaney promised the Commission would be responsive and personally promised that he would serve as the Commission liaison.

Commissioner Delaney made a motion to agree and approve a monument for Willie Stargell in Washington Park near the baseball diamond if all things come together through the Commission and Recreation and Park Department. Commissioner Cooke seconded the motion.

M/S/C DELANEY/COOKE (unanimously approved)

"To agree and approve a monument for Willie Stargell in Washington Park near the baseball diamond if all things come together through the Commission and Recreation and Park Department."

Approved (5): Restagno, Brown, Cooke, Delaney, Sonneman

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

7. REPORTS FROM RECREATION COMMISSION AND RECREATION & PARK DIRECTOR

- A. Recreation Division**
- B. Mastick Senior Center**
- C. Park Division**
- D. Other Reports and Announcements**

Director Wooldridge just started with the City this week, and said she's been out and about in the community meeting people. She has been working closely with Recreation Supervisor Russi on looking for ways to market the department, such as being on Facebook and doing mass e-mailings. Wooldridge also did a parks tour with Park Manager McDonald. She sees there are a lot of good programs already in place and she has new ideas to bring in as well.

Director Lillard mentioned that the Krusi Park project went through the zoning procedure and was approved. Next step is getting it on the Planning Board's agenda, and once it passes their approval, they can go out to bid. Director Wooldridge mentioned some trees have already been removed in preparation for the demolition process. Lillard supposes this could begin in July if things go smoothly, and expects everything to be finished by the end of the year.

Director Wooldridge said that summer registration is going well and there are already a number of classes that are full. Camp registrations are open and filling well also.

Commissioner Sonneman asked if judges had been selected for the Sandcastle Contest. Commissioner Delaney will be one of the judges and City Manager Russo will also be judging. The Recreation and Park Department will have a booth at the Spring Festival on the weekend.

Vice Chair Brown mentioned that Director Wooldridge had attended the Mastick Senior Center Fashion Show that day and was glad to see her there. Wooldridge said it had been a good time, and especially enjoyed the evening gowns presented.

Commissioner Sonneman took a moment to thank outgoing Director Lillard for his years of service to the community, Department and Commission. There had certainly been some rough times with on-going budget cuts, golf course and swimming pool issues, and a litany of other things. Lillard thanked the Commission for their support over the years, and said there is excellent staff in place now and the Department is positioned to move forward successfully.

8. STATUS REPORT ON ONGOING PROJECTS

None.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS, GENERAL

Commissioner Sonneman has citizens come to him who are concerned about certain people in the community taking it upon themselves to speak for all the sports organizations, and they think it's the Department and Commission responsibility to determine needs. Chair Restagno said this is a viable concern and is something that he and Commissioner Delaney had brought up with City Manager Russo. Russo believes that some things are more administrative versus policy, and that's where he draws the line between Commission responsibility and what the City Manager's Office does. Restagno went on to say that it is certainly a concern of his that these people are not speaking for a majority of the groups. There are a finite number of groups that would benefit from some of the initiatives, and the Commission has always been concerned with looking out for what's best for all Alamedans and groups as a whole.

Director Wooldridge said she has already spoken with Mr. Russo and they agree that if Measure C passes and the sports complex funding becomes available, that's something the Commission would be involved with and provide input. Wooldridge sees the Commission as representatives and ambassadors out in the field, and would look to them to tell her what community members' expectations are.

Vice Chair Brown said there had been soccer people at the previous meeting that had asked to be put on the next agenda. She didn't see them in attendance and wondered what happened. She went on to say that she believed clarification was needed to explain how you get things on the agenda and what timeframes need to be followed, etc.

Director Lillard said that with respect to the soccer group that had asked to be put on the agenda, the Department had spoken with them and they were not yet ready to move forward. As a general rule, the Commission packet goes out the Thursday before the meeting, so in order for things to be included, the Department needs to have all materials by Tuesday of that week so there is time to adjust the agenda, make appropriate copies and post on the web, etc.

Vice Chair Brown said that as an example, there was a Friends of the Park item that came in just before the Recreation Commission meeting and that didn't get on the agenda because it was too soon. The procedure and timelines really need to be made clear to everyone.

Commissioner Delaney said that the City Manager and his staff have an effort going on right now where they are having community meetings. Delaney had sat in on one and a big portion of it was not just deciding how big or small Commissions should be, but how do you as a citizen communicate to Commissions and Boards or the City Council. So they're going through a process here to make it clear. Based on what he saw, he believes things will improve dramatically because of that.

Commissioner Sonneman had been thinking a lot about this, and as a Commission they are responsible for looking at the entire community, and some of the comments that the members had made regarding the Willie Stargell memorial may have seemed tough, but were appropriate to ensure that it's about the greater good for the community.

Director Wooldridge invited one or two Commissioners to attend an upcoming biannual field scheduling meeting that would be held with the groups in June.

Commissioner Delaney said that the following Tuesday's Council meeting will review the Park Master Plan, but unfortunately it will follow the Golf discussion, so if you attend, plan on a late evening.

Chair Restagno mentioned the meeting they had with City Manager Russo, and one of the things the Commission should expect is to give their input on what to do with the Beltline. Also, Restagno has heard that there's the potential that the management of park sites here will be outsourced, and wonders if there is any truth to that. He understands that the Department is working towards cost recovery, and believes that the City almost gives services away that should be charged more for. Director Lillard said in recent years there have been proposals, especially in the field area, but have been met with such resistance in the community that they never went anywhere.

Chair Restagno wondered if there was a possibility of re-visiting the fee schedule on a more frequent basis, as it is reviewed and changed only once a year. Director Wooldridge said that the fee scheduled is approved annually and from her perspective, it would be helpful to take the time until next year to become familiar with the fee schedule and the dynamics of the groups. Financially, the Recreation and Parks Department is on solid ground for this coming budget year, and there's time to look at all these issues. She had already spoken with staff to look for possibilities to be more efficient.

10. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

11. SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, June 14, 2012

12. ADJOURNMENT